

SHIELD WEEKLY

TRUE STORIES FROM
FAMOUS CHIEFS



THE NOTE-BOOKS OF
OF POLICE

\$ 10,000 REWARD
or Steve Manley in a New Role
BY ALDEN F. BRADSHAW



SHIELD WEEKLY

TRUE DETECTIVE STORIES • STRANGER THAN FICTION

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Price, Five Cents.

\$10,000 Reward;

OR,

STEVE MANLEY IN A NEW ROLE.

By ALDEN F. BRADSHAW.

CHAPTER I.

\$10,000 REWARD!

The following munificent offer appeared as a display advertisement in all of the Pittsburgh daily newspapers of September 28th, the day following the alleged theft:

\$10,000 REWARD!

For the return of trunk, with contents intact, which was stolen from Damon's express wagon on the evening of September 27th. Trunk marked Wm. Gleason. If returned within five days, the above reward will be paid and no questions asked. Address William Gleason, Pittsburg, Pa.

Surely the contents of this trunk must have had some extraordinary value, to have occasioned so munificent an offer.

At about nine o'clock on the morning of the same day the man who made this offer was seated in private conference with the

chief of detectives in the latter's office at the police headquarters.

He was an attractive gentleman of forty, and a man whose wealth had lately been materially increased by the sudden death of his father, Peter Gleason, the glass manufacturer.

William Gleason himself was a prominent Pittsburg broker, a popular society man, with a wife and two children, and a magnificent residence in Allegheny.

Chief O'Mara laid down the paper containing the advertisement, to which his attention had just been called, and turned his inquiring eyes upon those of his visitor.

"What do you know about this theft, Mr. Gleason?" he asked, gravely.

"I can inform you in a nutshell," replied

Gleason. "My wife and two daughters returned yesterday from Glenhaven, which is the name of my summer residence, some twelve miles out from the city."

"I know the place," nodded Chief O'Mara.

"They arrived in Pittsburg about eight o'clock in the evening, and were at once driven to my home in Allegheny. The checks for their baggage, consisting of five trunks, among which was my own, were delivered to the driver of one of Damon's express teams, with instructions to bring the trunks to my house. The driver received the five trunks from the station baggage-room, and they were placed in his wagon. On arriving at my house in Allegheny one of the trunks was missing, and the driver claims that it was stolen from the wagon during the trip."

"Do you know the driver's name?"

"It is James Foley."

"Did he make any stops from the station to your house?"

"He says he did not."

"Who made the arrangements for the transportation of the trunks?"

"They were in charge of my valet, Paul Casson. He saw them placed on Foley's wagon, and saw the expressman drive off with them."

"Were you then at the station, Mr. Gleason?"

"I was not, sir. I arrived here from Philadelphia an hour later."

"Were there any arrangements made with this particular express company prior to the arrival of the train?"

"None, sir."

"And you say your valet had entire charge of the baggage?"

"Of the trunks, yes."

"How long has he been in your employ?"

"Two years."

"You trust him?"

"Thoroughly!" exclaimed Gleason. "I see

no reason why you should ask such a question, Chief O'Mara. The driver himself admits that the five trunks were put upon his wagon at the station, and that only four were found there when he arrived at my house. One of these, and by far the most valuable, was stolen from his wagon during the drive."

"Was it an open wagon?"

"It was covered last night because of the rain. It was a common express wagon."

"Ordinarily," said Chief O'Mara, "it would not be easy to steal a trunk out of a covered wagon moving through the city streets. You say that Foley made no stops between the station and your house?"

"That is what Foley says, not what I say," corrected Gleason, with a slight frown. "Moreover, the circumstances were not quite ordinary. The driver wore a rubber coat and hat, the latter having a flap or cape behind, to shed the rain. This may have had a tendency to prevent his hearing sounds made at the back of his wagon, or which might have been drowned by the noise of the wheels."

"Ah, I see!"

"At all events, Chief O'Mara, when he arrived at my house and was about to deliver the trunk it was found that the tailboard of the wagon had been dropped on the way there, and that one of the trunks was missing."

"Was the wagon left standing unattended in front of your residence for any length of time?"

"Not for a moment, sir!" exclaimed Gleason, quickly. "My valet already had reached the house, and was in the hall when the expressman arrived. He at once opened the front door and commanded him to bring the trunks into the house. He stood on the front steps while this was being done."

"You think it is improbable, then, that the trunk was stolen after the wagon stopped at your residence?"

"Impossible, sir! Moreover, the driver instantly discovered the theft on raising the leather flap at the back of the wagon."

"What did he then do?"

"What could he do? He delivered the other four trunks, then drove back in search of the one missing. Of course, he did not find it. On arriving home, an hour later, I was informed of my serious loss, and I at once notified the local police, and sent that reward advertisement to the newspapers for this morning's editions."

Chief O'Mara glanced again at the paper he had laid aside. His brow was clouded, and a curious light glowed in his grave eyes.

"You have not told me the whole story, Mr. Gleason," he presently said, quite curtly.

"Why do you infer that?" replied Gleason, with a slight start of surprise.

"Because there is more of a mystery here than the mere stealing of a trunk from an express wagon."

"Do you think so, Chief O'Mara?"

"I know so, sir! Why have you offered this large reward?"

"Because I am very anxious to recover the trunk."

"Were its contents worth ten thousand dollars?"

"Not the intrinsic value of its contents, sir. But the trunk contains one document, Chief O'Mara, the loss of which may involve more than fifty times ten thousand dollars."

"What document?"

"The last will and testament of my late father, Peter Gleason, by which I am the residuary legatee of an estate estimated at nearly half a million dollars."

"That puts a very different complexion on the matter!" exclaimed Chief O'Mara, quickly. "Is there any copy of this will?"

"None, sir."

"And if it was lost?"

"If it is lost I possibly may lose all except

that portion of the property which legally would have come to me had my father died intestate. Despite that its provisions are known to my lawyer, my brother and myself, the loss of this will occasion a suit at law which I may not be able to successfully contest."

"A suit instigated by whom?"

"By my brother, John Gleason."

"Does he not inherit under this will?"

"His legacy amounts to only a few thousand dollars."

"Then your father bequeathed you the bulk of his large property, did he?"

"He did, sir; and I presume that my brother resents this."

"You say that you presume it," rejoined Chief O'Mara. "Don't you positively know it?"

"No, sir; I do not. If John Gleason feels sore over being cut off in this way, he has been very careful to conceal his feelings. That is the one reason why I have approached this matter rather delicately; I do not wish to wrong my brother by unjust suspicions."

"Yet you fear that he may have had a hand in this theft?"

"I confess that I am not without misgivings, yet I have not the slightest proof of it."

"The significance of circumstantial evidence is sometimes lost sight of by those unfamiliar with detective work," observed Chief O'Mara. "Please give me the precise facts bearing on the case, Mr. Gleason?"

Gleason drew his chair a little nearer.

"I can do so quite briefly," he replied. "My father died ten days ago, quite suddenly. He was a widower and left but two direct heirs, my brother and myself."

"Is your brother the elder?"

"Yes, sir," nodded Gleason. "A few days after my father's death I was informed by

his attorney, Lawyer Beck, that my father had made a will almost entirely in my favor, and had left my brother only about ten thousand dollars."

"Do you know any reason for this?"

"Only that my father has always opposed my brother's way of living, and his dissolute habits," explained Gleason, gravely. "John has always been fast, what is commonly called a sport, and he has not a very enviable reputation."

"Is this brother of yours the John Gleason who is known as a horse racer and general gambler?" inquired the chief, with a slight change of countenance.

"Yes, sir," said William Gleason, acknowledging the relationship with the simplicity of a man not at all proud of it.

Chief O'Mara bowed.

"I can understand why your father may not have wished his honestly-earned money devoted to such pursuits," he quietly observed. "In some respects John Gleason is a pretty tough ticket, and I say it to you with all the consideration in the world."

"I appreciate your qualification of the remark," said Gleason, gravely. "I am quite aware that my brother John is not a relative to be proud of, yet I am averse to suspecting him unjustly."

"Please state the precise circumstances under which the will happened to be in the stolen trunk, Mr. Gleason. Possibly there may be some clew to work from."

"I hope so, I am sure."

"It looks very much to me as if there had been a put up job on that particular trunk. State the circumstances, please."

"They are these," rejoined Gleason, readily. "Until yesterday my wife and family have been living at Glenhaven, where we spend each summer."

"Have you been in the habit of going out there each night?"

"Oh, yes, invariably. On Saturday last I called upon Lawyer Beck and requested the privilege of taking the will to Glenhaven with me, for the purpose of showing it to my brother, who had agreed to come from Philadelphia to see it and to pass Sunday with me."

"Did John Gleason express a desire that you would do this?"

"He wrote me only that he would like to see the will, and that Sunday was the only day he conveniently could leave Philadelphia at just this time. Accordingly I made the proposition mentioned."

"That he should come to Glenhaven on Sunday?"

"Precisely."

"Did he do so?"

"He did, and examined the will."

"What did he say about it?"

"He expressed his disappointment, but otherwise evinced no feeling. We have always been on a friendly footing, despite that I deplore his evil habits."

"When did he leave Glenhaven?"

"Early Monday morning."

"Did he return to Philadelphia?"

"Yes, sir."

"You are quite sure of that?"

"I am very sure of it, sir, for I accompanied him."

"With any special object?"

"No, no special object, in so far as he was concerned. I had important personal business calling me to Philadelphia, so I made the journey with him."

"At his suggestion or your own?"

"At my own, sir."

"What about the will?"

"It was owing to this journey that the will found its way into my trunk at Glenhaven," Gleason went on to explain. "I did not wish to carry the document during the several days I expected to be absent, nor did it occur"

to me that I might safely have mailed it back to the attorney."

"What did you do with it?"

"I intrusted it to the care of my valet, instructing him to look after it, and to bring it with him to Allegheny when he came with my family the following Wednesday. That was yesterday."

"As a matter of fact, Mr. Gleason," gravely interposed Chief O'Mara, "were you not averse to having the will on your person chiefly because of the fact that you were to make this journey with your brother?"

"Well, yes, that was one reason why I confided it to the care of Paul Casson," Gleason gravely admitted.

"Did Casson remain at Glenhaven?"

"Yes, sir; he remained to aid my wife and her maids in packing the trunks, and closing the place for the season."

"How many maids has your wife?"

"Two, sir."

"Did your wife and the two maids know about the will?"

"I informed my wife about it, but I am not certain as to the maids."

"How about your daughters?"

"Both of them are children under ten, and I think——"

"If they are children of that age," interposed Chief O'Mara, "it does not matter. When did you give the will to your valet?"

"Before leaving Glenhaven, Monday morning."

"And to-day is Thursday. Did you give Casson your instructions at the same time you gave him the will?"

"No, I did not; I already had told him what I wished him to do."

"When did you tell him?"

"The night before, Sunday evening," said Gleason. "But he did not quite follow my instructions, though he now claims to have misunderstood them."

"Ah, that is rather odd! Tell me just what you said to him about the will?"

"I told him that it was an important document, also why I did not wish to carry it with me to Philadelphia. I then locked it in my desk at Glenhaven and gave him the key, telling him to take the will from the desk before leaving yesterday, and to bring it with him when he accompanied my family to Allegheny."

"Those instructions should have been plain," said Chief O'Mara, shortly. "In what way did he misunderstand them?"

"His mistake was natural enough, perhaps, and I am not inclined to suspect him," replied Gleason. "My intention was that he should place the will in his pocket, and to care for it until he could return it to me last evening. Instead of doing that he placed it with some few other papers of less importance in a secret compartment of my trunk, the packing of which he always looks after."

"And does he now state that he understood that he was to bring it in that way?"

"Yes, sir."

"And you believe him to be honest in the matter?"

"I never before have had reason to doubt his honesty," replied Gleason. "I may not have been perfectly explicit in giving him my instructions, Chief O'Mara, and I really think that Paul Casson did what he understood me to have commanded. No doubt, he thought the secret compartment of my trunk would be fully as safe as his own pocket."

"Don't it strike you as rather peculiar that this particular trunk should have been stolen?"

"Foley states that it was the last one to be put on his wagon, and was nearest the tail-board. I presume that thieves naturally would have taken the one easiest to secure."

"Yes, no doubt!" exclaimed Chief O'Mara, dryly. "Did Casson leave Glenhaven for any

length of time after receiving your instructions as to the will?"

"Not until yesterday, when he accompanied my wife and family to Allegheny."

"Why didn't you leave the will in the care of your wife?" asked Chief O'Mara, with a rather curious look in his searching eyes.

"Because my wife is very nervously inclined, and I did not care to impose the charge upon her," Gleason gravely explained. "As a matter of fact, I did not seriously apprehend the loss of the document, and I believed that my valet would take quite as good care of it as I should have done. It was not the first time I has trusted him in a like manner, and I had perfect faith in the young man's honesty. As, indeed, I now have."

"How old is Casson?"

"About twenty-five?"

"And has been in your employ about two years?"

"Rather longer than that, sir. He is a well-educated Frenchman, and came with me from Paris when I returned from abroad two years ago last May."

"Was he in your employ during the time you were in France?"

"Yes; for nearly three months."

"Did he come to you well recommended?"

"Decidedly so?"

Chief O'Mara consulted his watch.

"And Casson now states that the will was in the private compartment of the stolen trunk, does he?" demanded the chief.

"Yes, sir; he does. He is very emphatic in that statement."

Chief O'Mara closed his watch with a snap.

"It is now ten o'clock, Mr. Gleason," he said, with a snap to his words also. "Return here at two this afternoon. I then will tell you in what way your stolen trunk may be recovered."

CHAPTER II.

PLANNING A COUNTER-GAME.

It took Chief O'Mara until noon only to verify to his own satisfaction a few of the statements made by William Gleason; and the fact that he gave the investigation his personal attention indicates that he suspected the case to be more than an ordinary theft, and one requiring skillful handling.

An interview with Lawyer Beck established the fact that Gleason had called for the will, as stated, and that its loss was a serious matter.

"There is no duplicate copy of the will," explained the lawyer; "and, although I know its provisions, if John Gleason, who is quite capable of any sort of knavery, should contest the matter in the courts, he very possibly could succeed in acquiring a legal if not a moral right to one-half of the Gleason estate."

"As a matter of fact, then, John Gleason is the only person who would profit by the loss of the will, is he not?" inquired Chief O'Mara.

"Precisely," replied the attorney. "If the will is not recovered, and it cannot be proved that he is responsible for its loss, the matter assumes a very serious aspect."

"I fully believe that he is at the bottom of the job," said Chief O'Mara, decisively.

"So do I, as far as that goes," rejoined the lawyer. "Yet, from what I hear from Gleason, he appears to have covered his tracks very completely."

"Then it remains for me to uncover them!" exclaimed the chief of detectives. "I doubt very much if he can get the best of me at the finish."

Yet an interview with Foley, the expressman, did not give any definite clew tending to incriminate John Gleason.

Foley easily proved that he was at the railway station on other business when the

train arrived with the Gleason family and baggage, and that Casson only incidentally had engaged him to take the several trunks to Allegheny.

He stated that he had received the checks for the trunks from the valet, and that Casson personally had seen them placed on the express wagon. Foley then had driven from the station, and had crossed the Ninth street bridge, proceeding without a stop to Gleason's house in Allegheny. In the course of this drive the trunk had mysteriously disappeared, and, as Foley claimed, utterly without his knowledge.

The evening was known to have been dark and rainy, with considerable fog; and the only explanation Foley could offer was that advantage had been taken of these conditions and the trunk stolen during the trip.

Beyond this he denied any knowledge of the affair, and the Damon Express Company, by which he was employed, testified to his general good character, and volunteered to defray the entire expense of the police investigation.

At noon Chief O'Mara returned to his office at headquarters, with a plan of operation already matured in his mind.

His first step was to call Steve Manley into his office, and give him a general outline of the mysterious case.

"Now, Steve," he added, in conclusion, "I will tell you what I suspect, and what I want you to do."

Knowing that a very important bit of work was about to devolve upon him, Steve was all attention.

"To begin with," explained the chief, "I believe that John Gleason is at the bottom of this job, and that he now knows where the trunk is, or, at least, who has it. But Gleason is said to have been in Philadelphia since Monday, when his brother gave the will to the valet, and if he really is responsible for

the theft, it must have been done with the help of others."

"Mebbe the valet had a hand in it, sir," suggested Steve.

"The valet is the very party I suspect," nodded Chief O'Mara. "He received his instructions from William Gleason on Sunday evening, and it is possible that before Monday morning John Gleason entered into some agreement with the valet by which this scheme could be worked."

"There was time enough for it, sir."

"Decidedly so, in case the valet could be bribed."

"Mebbe the expressman was in the job, too, sir."

"If so, I think we shall run him down at the finish," said Chief O'Mara. "At present, however, I shall let him alone and look after the chief parties to the affair. If there was any design in which Casson and John Gleason were confederates, I first wish to discover what it was and how it was executed. I suspect that John Gleason will come here from Philadelphia as soon as he safely can admit being informed of the theft, and that he then will attempt to secure the will from the party now in possession of it."

"You think he has planned to get it without any one getting on to it?"

"That is it precisely."

"Wouldn't it be a good scheme to shadow the valet, sir, and see if he and John Gleason have any meeting," suggested Steve.

"That is just what I want you to do," said Chief O'Mara; "but it must be done very shrewdly. John Gleason still is friendly with his brother, and he no doubt is working that point with some secret design in view. I wish to discover what his object is, and just what he has been doing. He no doubt will visit his brother's house, if he comes on here, and by watching him and the valet we may discover where the trunk is

located. I want you to undertake this part of the work, and I have a plan by which I think we may succeed in solving the mystery."

"What's the plan, Chief O'Mara?"

"Do you think you could make yourself up as a girl?"

"As a girl?" exclaimed Steve, laughing. "I can do that dead easy, sir."

"You would look enough like one, but how about your actions? Could you play such a part?"

"I can do it away up to the top notch, Chief O'Mara!" cried Steve, eagerly. "Any guy ought to be able to act the way a girl does. What's the whole game, sir?"

"I will tell you presently. Here comes Mr. Gleason, now."

The tall figure of William Gleason had at that moment appeared on the threshold, and Chief O'Mara quickly signed for him to enter and take a chair.

"I have just received a telegram from my brother in Philadelphia," he said, as he took the seat indicated.

"Ah, that is quite significant!" exclaimed the chief. "What does he say?"

"Only that he sees by the papers that I have met with quite a serious loss, and he expresses his regret."

"Very kind in him!" laughed the chief.

He at once suspected that Gleason had sent this message solely to show that he still was in Philadelphia, and not in Pittsburg, where he might have had a hand in the robbery the previous evening.

"As a matter of fact, Mr. Gleason," he added; "you do not believe that your brother had a part in this theft, do you?"

"I do not see how he could have had, sir, despite that he is the one who might profit by it," replied the broker. "John went to Philadelphia with me Monday, and I am sure he has not been here since."

"Do you wish me to clear up this case for you and recover your father's will?" demanded the chief, quite curtly.

"Most assuredly I do!"

"I will undertake it on one condition."

"What is the condition, sir?"

"That you will follow my instructions to the very letter."

"I will do that, I promise you."

"In the first place, then, you are to say nothing about the work I am doing except to your wife. It will be necessary that you confide in her, and I presume you can rely upon her silence and discretion?"

"Beyond a doubt, sir."

"You say that she employs two maids?"

"Yes."

"What are their duties?"

"One is a chambermaid, chiefly. The other is my wife's waiting maid."

"Did either of them have a hand in packing the trunks brought from Glenhaven?"

"Only my wife's maid assisted in that work."

"Then your wife must discharge her to-day, Mr. Gleason, and advertise for a girl to take her place."

"But I feel sure that this girl is innocent of any——"

"Stop right there, Mr. Gleason!" exclaimed Chief O'Mara. "You are to do what I command in this affair, or I will throw up the case at once."

"Pardon me!" said Gleason, quickly. "I will do so, I assure you. I had in mind only the welfare of the girl."

"You had better keep in mind the fact that you have a fortune at stake. As for the girl, you can repair her interests later, if you so desire. I want you to discharge the girl to-day, and advertise for another."

"It shall be done, sir."

"In response to your advertisement, Mr. Gleason," continued Chief O'Mara, "this

young detective, in the attire of a girl, will apply at your house for the position."

"As waiting-maid to my wife!" exclaimed Gleason, staring blankly at Steve.

"Precisely, sir."

"Hully gee!" thought Steve, with a grin on his boyish face. "But here is a pudding!"

"But my wife can hardly avail herself of a boy's service in that capacity!" cried Gleason, quite aghast.

"You must explain the situation to her, and she must adapt herself to it," persisted Chief O'Mara. "She can dispense with a maid for a week or two, surely, yet at the same time have it appear that she is employing one."

"Why, yes, she can do that."

"Well, that is all I require of her."

"Did you say that he would be dressed as a girl when he applied for the situation?" asked Gleason, again bestowing a curious glance upon Steve's smiling face.

"Certainly he will be dressed as a girl."

"Does he know anything about a maid's duties?"

"Your wife must overlook any failings in that respect. In a word, Mr. Gleason, I wish to place him in your house for a special purpose, and you must plan for it with your wife, and in accordance with these instructions. The question is, are you willing to do so?"

"I have already said so, Chief O'Mara."

"Very good, then! See to it that the maid is discharged to-day, and that the girl who calls to-morrow in response to your advertisement is employed to take her place."

"You mean the boy who calls!"

"No, I mean the girl who calls," said Chief O'Mara, quite sharply. "At all events, whether the sex is one or the other, the party who calls must be received as a girl. And, take heed, Mr. Gleason, that neither you nor your wife betray any of the facts.

One half of your inheritance may depend upon your discretion."

"I will see that your instructions are followed, sir," said Gleason, quickly. "But there may be other applicants for the situation, sir, and I may not recognize this boy in a girl's attire."

"Mebbe all girls look alike to him, chief," put in Steve, by the way of comment.

But Chief O'Mara's grave countenance did not relax.

"He will bring a letter of introduction, Mr. Gleason, signed by one Mrs. Parmenter."

"Ah, that will easily identify him. I will instruct my wife accordingly."

"That is all, then," bowed Chief O'Mara. "You may expect him about noon to-morrow."

CHAPTER III.

THE MYSTERY DEEPENS.

At precisely noon on the following day, Steve Manley presented himself at the Gleason residence in Allegheny.

But Chief O'Mara himself would scarce have recognized him.

Steve had spent the entire previous afternoon in preparing for the new rôle he was expected to play, and his make-up was perfect. A more attractive young lady never stood in leather.

Yet Steve had been clever enough not to overdo the part. He was plainly dressed in a blue serge, with a neatly-fitting jacket to match; and his fresh, round countenance was set off to great advantage by a curly blonde wig. The rest of his wardrobe had been selected with equally good taste, and left in a small trunk at his lodgings.

As it happened, Paul Casson answered Steve's ring at the door, and the valet at once suspected the mission of the young and

pretty girl he saw, two others already having called in response to the advertisement.

That Paul Casson was quickly struck by the attractions of this one, and felt a hope that she might be more successful, was betrayed in his clean-cut, expressive, French face.

And Steve was not slow to notice this.

"Is the lady of the house at home?" he asked, with an innocent smile and a very musical voice.

"Yes, miss, she is," smiled Casson, speaking with a slight French accent. "Who shall I say wishes to see her?"

"One of the maids of the late Mrs. Parmenter, who died of the grip a week ago, Tuesday," said Steve, glibly.

"Oh, you're an applicant for the situation of maid to Mrs. Gleason!" exclaimed Casson, with a great display of friendly interest.

And he signed for Steve to enter.

"Yes, sir, I am looking for the job," said Steve, wiping his lips with an affected air, and with a handkerchief so small that he almost lost it in the operation.

"I hope she'll engage you," whispered Casson, with a wink.

Steve saw that he had made an impression, and was resolved to profit by it. He returned the wink and whispered back:

"So do I, sir, if you're in service here."

"I am," nodded Casson. "I am Gleason's valet."

"Is the mistress the kind I'm likely to make a hit with?" asked Steve.

"Have you recommendations?"

"Sure I have. From the lady I last worked for."

"Then, I think you'll get the place. Wait here and I'll inform her."

Casson was right in his predictions, but he did not dream how little the recommendation had to do with Mrs. Gleason's decision. Steve was very quickly accepted to

fill the position, and that afternoon he took up his abode in the Gleason residence and had his trunk brought to the house.

He found Mrs. Gleason a very pleasant lady, as willing as her husband to aid him in the work he had on hand, and before night Steve found himself quite at home in the house and had made friends with one and all of its inmates.

As he saw considerable of Paul Casson, whom he soon set down to be a very clever and crafty fellow, Steve took good care to further encourage the Frenchman's sly attentions and before night he had him well in hand in that respect.

With Casson it was almost a case of love at first sight, though this may not have been of the most commendable character.

The delicate work Steve had on hand, however, took shape even sooner than he expected; for that very afternoon one of the predictions of Chief O'Mara was verified.

Jack Gleason, despite his statement that he could not conveniently leave Philadelphia just then, suddenly showed up in Pittsburgh. He wore a disguise, however, in approaching the first place he visited. This was the saloon of one Jim Kennedy, on Bluff street, and was known to be one of the most dangerous dives in the whole city.

Kennedy himself was an ex-convict and pugilist, and a man who would shrink from no desperate venture in which there was money.

He was talking at the bar with Ike Fenton, another of the same sort, when Jack Gleason entered; but neither recognized him, though these were the men he had called to see.

He walked straight through the saloon, however, for there were other occupants, and entered a private back room.

"Tell Kennedy and the man he is talking with that I want to speak to them," he said

to the waiter who followed him into the room to take his order.

While waiting, Gleason closed the door and removed the heavy false beard he was wearing and tossed it carelessly upon the table. He was a large man, with broad shoulders and an imposing figure, and was quite flashily dressed. His features would have been attractive but for the signs of dissipation and a certain sinister expression in his dark eyes.

"There's a party in the back room wants you two," said the waiter, in a low tone, at Kennedy's elbow.

"Wants us?"

"That's what he said."

"Did you know him?"

"He was new to me."

"Mebbe it's Jack Gleason," said Fenton, in an undertone.

"Sure! I'd ought to have thought of him," nodded Kennedy, leading the way to the room.

Gleason met them with a smile, and quickly extended his hand.

"Congratulations, Jim!" he exclaimed, in tones of evident satisfaction. "You did the job finely. I owe you both my thanks, and I'll make good according to agreement as soon as the document is in my hands."

Kennedy flashed a quick look at Ike Fenton, and both gave vent to a rather curious laugh.

"If you don't make good until you get the document, Jack, it's like to be many a day!" cried Kennedy, as he dropped Gleason's hand.

The latter threw back with a quick frown.

"What do you mean by that, Jim?" cried Gleason, sharply, with manifest uneasiness.

"Just what I say."

"Not that you have lost the trunk?"

"No, we've not lost it."

"Cease your fooling, then!" Gleason cried,

quite angrily. "With a fortune at stake, I am not in a mood for it. Where is the trunk?"

"We don't know."

"Don't know?"

"I should say not. We have never seen it."

An oath broke from Gleason's lips as he strode suddenly forward, with his face grown pale and threatening, and laid a heavy hand on Kennedy's shoulder.

"See here!" he cried, sternly; "don't try playing any of your infernal games on me. I'll not stand for treachery. I made you an offer for this job, and I am ready to make good the moment it's done. But I'll not stand for any underhanded business."

"What do you think?" growled Fenton, sharply. "That we have got the trunk?"

"Of course you have it!" cried Gleason. "Who else can have it? You're going back on me, that's plain enough; and you mean to claim the reward offered by my brother."

"You——"

"Easy, Ike!" interposed Kennedy, quickly checking the man's sudden display of anger. "Jack's square enough, and it looks mightily as if we were up to the game he suspects, seeing that there'd be more in it for us than he offered. But you're wrong, Jack Gleason, all the same."

Gleason fell back a step, and looked at them with frowning eyes.

"You don't mean that you haven't got the trunk?" he again demanded.

"That's just what I mean, Jack," said Kennedy, grimly. "And I'm sorry enough to say it."

"But the trunk was certainly stolen."

"That's true enough. But we had no hand in it."

"Good God! You don't mean that some other parties go it?" cried Gleason, more pale and dismayed than ever.

"That's just about the size of it," said Kennedy. "Sit down and I'll tell you about it."

It was plain enough that Jack Gleason did not believe these assertions, yet he dropped heavily into a chair by the table and waited for Kennedy's explanation.

"We started the job just as you planned with Fenton in Philadelphia," said Kennedy, seating himself on the edge of the table. "Fenton came to me and told me the whole scheme, and what there would be in it for us, and we were ready enough to do it."

"Did you see Foley?"

"Sure, I saw Foley."

"Did he agree to do his part?"

"Yes, and he did it, so far as I know," Kennedy rejoined. "He was at the station when the trunks came and met the valet just as the two of you had planned it at Glenhaven. There was no trouble about that part of the job, and Foley got the trunk all right. We saw him when he took 'em!"

"Yes, and I heard the whole talk between him and the valet," put in Fenton. "It was on the dead level."

"Then Foley started for the Ninth street bridge, as agreed," continued Kennedy; "and we two drove well ahead of him, so as to be there to lift the trunk at the right time. Foley was to drive slow on the bridge, so as to give us a chance to slip the trunk out of his wagon."

"Then, how in thunder did the scheme miscarry?" cried Gleason.

"I can only tell you what we did," Kennedy sharply retorted. "It was darker on the Allegheny end of the bridge, so we drove nearly across, thinking there would be the safest place for us to do the work. We got there nearly five minutes ahead of Foley, and he walked his horse the whole length of the bridge."

"Well?"

"When he came opposite where we had hauled up, we slipped in behind the wagon to lift the trunk and make off with it. It would have been dead easy to have got away with it, for 'twas dark and foggy and we wouldn't have been seen more than ten yards away. But the trunk was not on the team, and that's why we didn't get it."

"You don't mean that it already had been stolen?"

"That's just what I mean," said Kennedy, decisively. "The tailboard of the wagon was down and the trunk gone."

"And Foley knew nothing about it?"

"Not the first thing."

"Impossible!"

"That's what he says, anyway!" Fenton bluntly interposed. "I have seen him and had a talk with him. He says he drove slow, not knowing what part of the bridge we were on, and that the trunk was lifted without his knowing it. That's just how the thing stands, and you can cuss and swear about it as much as you like. We would have done our part, only the trunk was gone, and you know as well as we do who swiped it."

"And if you're looking for treachery," added Kennedy, with a significant nod, "you had better look for it in the duffer you laid the plan with at Glenhaven."

"Casson?"

"Yes, if that's his name."

"I cannot believe that he went back on me," cried Gleason, angrily.

"He's a blamed sight more likely to have done it than either of us," retorted Fenton, with a resentful growl.

"But he did not leave Glenhaven until he came up here with the family."

"I don't care if he didn't. He's the party you had better look after. If any of the fly gang about town had done the job, they'd have been after the reward offered long before this time."

"You may be right in that," admitted Gleason, struck by the idea.

"We have been giving it to you straight, Jack," added Kennedy. "And I think as Foley does, that this Casson has in some way done the whole of us."

"If he has I'll ring the frog-eating Frenchman's neck!" cried Gleason, starting quickly to his feet. "Will you two help me out, if I find that I need your aid?"

"If you find that he has the trunk," replied Kennedy, "you still can count on us as being on the job for the price offered. I'm a bit sore myself at being done in this way."

"You have not seen Casson?"

"We didn't think it safe to take the chance."

"And we couldn't let you know about it," added Fenton, "because we didn't have your address in Philadelphia."

"I see! I see!" muttered Gleason, with an ugly look settled on his dark face. "You two wait till I have seen him, and then I'll let you hear from me. I begin to think you're right, and that he has been double-dealing."

"If he has, you bring him down here, Jack, and we'll soon get the truth out of him," growled Kennedy. "When will you see him?"

"This very evening," said Gleason, sharply. "I'll go to my brother's house at once. Let the matter rest until you hear from me; and then——"

He did not finish his words, but the expression on his white face spoke louder, even; and, having carefully readjusted the disguise he had removed, he hurried from the saloon and started for Gleason's residence in Allegheny.

CHAPTER IV.

CASSON SHOWS HIS HAND.

"Well, John, what brings you here?"

This was the question with which John

Gleason was greeted by his brother, on his arrival at his house in Allegheny.

William Gleason was more than surprised at seeing him, yet it was not in his nature to be hard on his own flesh and blood, and he did not believe that John Gleason, in whose company he had been from the time of showing him the will, could have succeeded in working the scheme so shrewdly suspected by Chief O'Mara.

Jack Gleason did not find it difficult to impose upon such a man as this.

"I came on here to help you recover the will, if there is anything I can do toward it," he explained, with a friendliness he was far from feeling.

"To tell the truth, Bill," he added, "I have feared you might suspect me of having had a hand in this job, seeing that I possibly might profit by it; and I could not rest easy without assuring myself that you had no such suspicion. So I ran on here for a few days, in the hope of being able to help you recover the stolen property."

"Do you think you can do more than the police?" asked the other, smiling rather doubtfully.

"I'm closer in touch with some of the tough gangs of Pittsburg than any of the police," returned John Gleason, bluntly; "and I may be able to learn more than the best of them. At all events, it will do no harm to try."

"Then you really mean to aid me?"

"Yes, Jack, I do! And as far as the will goes, you need have no fear that I'll take any advantage of your loss, for I want no part of the old man's money, more than what he left me. And I've an infernally strong mind not to accept that. I wouldn't, if he was alive!"

Though most of this was a lie out of the whole cloth, it was said in a way that had weight with William Gleason; and whatever

misgivings he may have had, he received this reprobate brother with an outward show of friendliness and credulity.

"By gracious, the chief was right," thought Steve, when he discovered that Jack Gleason was in the house. "It's odds the big duffer has come here to fix up the game with Casson. The question is, when and where will they meet? Wherever it is, I must be round to pipe it off."

Though he kept as sharp a watch as possible on the movements of both, he did not detect a sign between them until after the family came out from dinner.

Then he saw Jack Gleason meet the valet in the hall, as the latter was going to the servants' dining-room. As they passed, Gleason quickly slipped something into Casson's hand, which the valet at once thrust into the side pocket of his house jacket.

"The game begins, and it's odds that was a love-letter," said Steve, to himself, gazing down over the baluster rail above. "I reckon I'll have to see the nature of that communication."

As it then was the servants' time for dinner, Steve did not find it difficult to accomplish his object.

Hurrying down to the basement dining-room, he overtook Casson in the lower entry.

The valet was just replacing in his side pocket a crumpled slip of paper, and Steve then knew that he had hit the nail on the head.

Casson, however, appeared in no way disturbed by what he evidently had read.

"Do we eat down here?" asked Steve, joining him, with a smile quite as alluring as a genuine girl and a pronounced coquette could have bestowed.

Casson quickly slipped his hand through Steve's arm, and replied, laughing softly:

"Yes, in a room off the kitchen. This is your first meal here, is it not?"

"Yes, and I hope the bill of fare won't run short."

"Are you hungry?"

"As a cat without a home. Say, I want to sit alongside of you at the table. I feel like I know you better'n I do the others. And I like you better," Steve added, in a significant whisper.

Casson evidently was quite glad to hear this, and gave Steve a sly hug.

And Steve secured the note from the valet's pocket at the same time.

"I'll see that you have a chair next to mine," said Casson, softly. "What is your first name?"

"Rosy," grinned Steve, with becoming modesty.

"And mine is Paul. Come in with me."

So Steve joined the other servants at dinner, and laid for a chance to glance at the paper he still retained in his hand. He was clever enough to easily accomplish this, and to slip it back into Casson's pocket after having read it.

The communication was only a line or two.

"I shall walk out to the stable for a smoke at eight. Join me there."

That was all the message contained, and it was not even signed.

"They are going to have a smoke-talk out in the barn, and I'll take it in on the quiet," said Steve to himself, well satisfied with the way that things were working. "If I can locate the trunk I'll set 'em all guessing by swiping it myself."

Just before eight he slipped out by the side door of the house and stole into the stable. The groom was out with one of the teams, and the broad doors stood open. It then was dark outside, and only a lantern dimly illumined the stable.

Steve concealed himself in one of the stalls and waited.

Scarce five minutes had passed when he

heard Jack Gleason's heavy stride in the gravel driveway, and then the man entered the barn, filling a briar pipe as he came.

There was but one stable hand employed there, and a glance assured Gleason that this man was absent with one of the teams.

He had waited less than a minute, and was about lighting his pipe, when the quick, elastic step of the Frenchman sounded upon the driveway.

With a movement very significant of his suppressed feelings, Jack Gleason threw down the lighted match, and turned to meet him as he entered the stable.

And Steve was not a little surprised at seeing them meet much more like foes than like friends.

"Come here, Casson, you double-dealing scoundrel!" Gleason at once cried, sternly, at the same time seizing the young man by the shoulder and jerking him further into the stable.

"Tell me at once," he added; "what infernal game you have played on me! Out with it, and the truth, mind you, or I'll break every bone in your body."

This was the characteristic bluff of a sport and a gambler, who was not perfectly sure where he stood; but it fell upon Casson like water on a duck's back.

Quickly breaking Gleason's hold, he drew up his tall, lithe figure, smoothing the wrinkles from his garments and rejoining, curtly:

"*Sacré!* Don't spoil the set of my coat, Mr. Gleason. If I'm to be treated like a dog, I shall show you a dog has teeth. What do you want of me, that you asked me to come out here?"

"You know what I want of you!" cried Gleason, in a rage he scarce could contain.

"*Pardieu!* I'm not a clairvoyant," retorted Casson, with a shrug of his shoulders.

"What have you done with that trunk?"

"Hey? That's a pretty question. Didn't your two ugly ruffians steal it?"

"You know they did not."

"It was stolen."

"By who, then?"

"*Sacré,* I thought, of course, they took it."

"You lie!" Gleason passionately hissed, shaking his clenched hand under the nose of the nonchalant valet. "You know you lie, and your damnable white face and shrinking eyes show it. Tell me the truth, I say, or I'll not leave a whole bone in your skin."

Though Jack Gleason looked quite capable of executing this terrible threat, the Frenchman did not shrink by so much as a hair's breadth. With an indifferent shrug of his arms and shoulders, he retorted, coolly:

"If monsieur sees so much in my face, what need to ask any questions? I did what I agreed to do for you at Glenhaven."

"Did you put the will in the trunk?"

"In the secret compartment, just as I agreed to do. Madame, Mrs. Gleason, will vouch for that, for she saw me do it, and then relieved me of the key."

"Was it in there when the trunk was stolen from Foley's wagon?"

"I had not removed it."

"Then no one had."

"I think that is right," smiled the Frenchman, in his crafty fashion. "But for madame having been at my elbow, I should have saved myself much trouble. I wouldn't have put the will in the trunk at all."

"What do you mean by that?"

"*Sacré,* but you have not the cunning of the fox, or you would guess. If the will was worth so much to you, what could have been easier for me than to let you get the credit of stealing the trunk, and at the same time to have kept the will in my pocket. Madame came in the way of that by wanting to see it safely packed in the trunk. She was one meddler at that time!"

"And that necessitated your doing what?" demanded Gleason, with a curious change of countenance.

"*Pardieu!* but you begin to see through a ladder!" exclaimed the Frenchman, with a leer of mingled cunning and disdain.

"It forced me," he went on; "to see that two good friends of mine got the trunk before your two ugly ruffians could get it. Hey! that is all. If the will is worth so much to you, it should be worth more to me than what you paid me for doing this work. So I wired to my friends to be at the depot, and they now have both the trunk and the will."

The audacious boldness with which this confession was made, and his own treachery admitted, fairly broke the bonds of Jack Gleason's fury.

With a vehement oath, and a look like that of murder in his flaming eyes, the gambler reached forth and seized the Frenchman by the throat.

"You admit this to me, you treacherous whelp!" he cried, fiercely, yet scarce above his breath. "Tell me where the trunk is, and how I may——"

But there he suddenly caught his breath and recoiled.

The gleaming barrel of a revolver in Casson's hand was thrust over his arm, and its threatening muzzle stared him straight in the face.

"Let go!" hissed the Frenchman, with a quick flash of his cold eyes.

"You devil——"

"Let go, or the devil will have you for his own! You make the grand mistake, if you think I take what you call the bluff. Now, talk like the gentleman, or I'll leave you and go into the house."

The Frenchman was losing his easy command of the English tongue, despite that his

voice remained as cold and his eyes as scornfully determined.

Jack Gleason had dropped his hand from the man's throat, and stood with every nerve and muscle quivering with impotent passion.

It was all of a minute before he could find words, and then, with a look on his face to have terrified most men, he harshly demanded:

"So you have the trunk, have you?"

Paul Casson threw one leg over the corner of the grain chest near by, and toyed carelessly with the weapon he still retained in his slender white hand.

"No, I have not the trunk," he responded, with a cool and steady stare at the man opposite.

"But you know who has?"

"Yes, I know who has."

"Friends of yours?"

"*Pardieu!* very good friends, and very reliable."

"Does my brother suspect you of this?"

"*Sacré!* that is a fool's question. How do I know? If he does, what good? I still have the trunk and the will where I can get them."

"And what is your design?"

"To make the most of my possessions."

"You mean that you are going to get as much money as possible for the return of the will?"

"That is what I mean."

"Have you forgotten that I can get in your way?" demanded Gleason, striding a step nearer the cold-blooded young rascal.

"Do you think so?" sneered Casson.

"I can expose you."

"There is no danger of that."

"Don't be so sure."

"You have too much at stake. Besides, no one would believe you."

"What do you mean by that, you cur?"

"You have found that a cur has teeth,"

retorted Casson, with a vicious smile. "I mean that I'll tell of the work you engaged me to do at Glenhaven, should you betray me, and that I did it according to agreement."

"What of that?"

The Frenchman again shrugged his shoulders significantly.

"They will believe that you stole the trunk, not I, and that you still retain it," he said, pointedly. "My word is better than yours, under the circumstances."

There was little doubt of this, and Jack Gleason knew it.

He strode nearer yet, again shaking his fist in Casson's taunting face.

"And you hope to best me in this way, you treacherous scoundrel," he said, sternly. "Don't you know that I make take even your miserable life?"

"I'm not afraid of that."

"You're not?"

"No, *sacré!* Why should I be? I'm perfectly safe from you, so long as I have the will where I can lay hands on it. You'll not harm me before you have secured it, eh?"

And the crafty rascal looked Gleason fairly in the face and laughed at the rage it pictured. Gleason saw that he was in a mess, and that he was gaining nothing by his present course. He changed his tactics, and now asked, sharply:

"What do you mean to do with the will?"

"Keep it till I can realize on it."

"You already can realize ten thousand dollars."

"That is not enough."

"From whom do you hope to get more?"

"Yourself!"

"You think I may secure half of my father's estate, and you then mean to bleed me by threatening to produce the will!" cried Gleason, in tones tremulous with bitter resentment. "Is that your design?"

Casson smiled again in his cunning way, and came down off the chest.

"*Pardieu!*" he exclaimed, softly. "At last you see through the ladder. Yes, that is what I mean to do! Or to wait till Mr. Gleason, my master, raises the reward. Think it over alone, sir, for I must return to the house. But don't forget that I hold the ribbons and intend to hold them. *Sacré!* Why should I fear you? Absurd!"

And with a snap of his fingers in Gleason's threatening white face, the insolent fellow thrust his weapon back into his pocket, and then started quickly for the house.

CHAPTER V.

STEVE GETS DOWN TO WORK.

From his place of concealment Steve had overheard the entire interview between Jack Gleason and the valet.

It now was plain enough how the scheme had been worked.

Jack Gleason had taken advantage of the fact that his brother intended leaving the will with Casson at Glenhaven, and had bribed the valet to put it in the trunk, and to deliver the latter to a certain expressman on arriving in Pittsburg.

Jack then had gone to Philadelphia with his brother, and there had arranged with Ike Fenton to come to Pittsburg, and plan with Kennedy and Foley to secure the trunk containing the document.

Had the several parties been reliable, it would have been difficult, indeed, to have discovered the will, or to have proved that Jack Gleason had any part in the robbery.

The crafty valet, however, had become more avaricious when he discovered the value of the will, and saw the opportunity of which he could avail himself.

But for Mrs. Gleason's watchful care, he would not have put the will in the trunk; but would have retained it on his person and

allowed the thieves to secure the trunk without it. This would have left him in possession of the will, and yet the trunk thieves would have had the credit of stealing it.

As it turned out, however, Casson had been obliged to steal the trunk himself in order to recover the will. This he had done by wiring friends to meet him at the station on his arrival; and after giving Foley the trunk he had instructed his own confederates where and how to get it from Foley's wagon before Kennedy and Fenton could do the job.

The main features of this audacious piece of treachery were at once discerned by Steve, on hearing the interview in the stable; and it was plain that the confederates of Casson were now in possession of both the trunk and the will.

How to locate the stolen property was now the question.

It was evident that the valet had not yet had an opportunity to safely see his confederates since the theft was committed, and that they were laying low until a meeting could be had without causing suspicion.

Steve quickly decided what he would do, and he at once set to work upon a most clever piece of strategy.

Jack Gleason stood where Casson had left him, his white features convulsed with rage, and his brows knit in bitter thought.

Moving quickly and silently, Steve slipped back of the several stalls, and gained the passageway to the stable floor.

Then he coolly knocked down a wooden peck measure from a peg on which it hung, and so disclosed his presence.

Jack Gleason swung round like a man struck with a whip, and beheld what appeared to be a girl, in the utter consternation and fright of such a discovery.

"Oh, please, sir, I didn't mean to!" cried Steve, as if terribly alarmed for a moment. "I wasn't doing anything!"

In reality, Gleason's rage was turned to sudden dismay. He saw at once that his interview with Casson probably had been overheard, and he realized how disastrous it might prove.

Striding up to Steve, he looked sharply down at him and demanded, sternly:

"Where did you come from?"

"Please, sir, I was in one of the stalls," gasped Steve.

"What were you doing there?"

"I came out here to look at the hosses, sir; and when I heard you coming, I was afraid I might get the bounce for being out here. So I took a sneak into the stall, thinking I'd stay there till you went out again."

"Have you been there ever since I came out here?"

"Yes, sir; 'cause I couldn't get out unless you saw me."

"Then you overheard what was said here!" cried Gleason, sternly.

"Yes, sir, but I won't give it away!" cried Steve, quickly. "If I'd had any wool, I'd have stuck it in my ears; but I didn't have any. Say, sir, I wouldn't give you away, not for the world!"

"You wouldn't?" demanded Gleason, now staring curiously down at him.

"Sure, I wouldn't, 'cause I didn't mean to hear it," replied Steve, with a great display of loyalty to Gleason's interests. "I'm on to the game that guy wants to play, and I don't like the looks of him."

"You don't?"

"That's what I don't sir. Sure, sir, I thought he'd shoot the gun at you, and I came near yelling right out when I saw him."

"What are you doing here, anyway?" demanded Gleason, rather less inclined to suspicion. "Are you employed in the house?"

"Yes, sir."

"In what capacity?"

"I'm Mrs. Gleason's new maid, sir."

"Since when?"

"Only to-day, sir. And I reckon she don't like me much," replied Steve, with a dismal shake of his head. "But she'll have to keep me the week out, 'cause that was the agreement. The other maid went yesterday, and I got the place this morning."

"Where did you work before coming here?"

"In New York, till my sister died here, and then I struck this city. But I don't like it. It's too slow."

Gleason now decided that the girl was a rather doubtful character, who probably had fallen into her present position more by chance than merit. He thought her language a little off, moreover, and he suspected he could easily bribe her, in which case he saw a way to make use of her.

"You think that your mistress will not keep you, eh?" he now said, steadily searching Steve's artful face.

"That's what I think, sir," nodded Steve. "She don't seem to think I'm half a smart as I do."

"Yet you expect to serve your week out?"

"Yes, sir; she said she'd keep me the full week, so's to get wise to me good qualities."

"What will you do if she then discharges you?"

"Go back to New York, if I have the fare, or if the walking ain't too bad."

"Would you do something for me, if I'd pay you well for doing it?"

"I'd do most anything for money, sir," Steve readily answered.

"And keep your mouth closed?" demanded Gleason.

"I'd only open it when I eat," Steve eagerly returned. "Sure, I'd keep it closed, if there was anything in it. I'd never say a word."

"If you can do what I want done, and it works all right, I'll pay you a hundred dollars."

"A hundred dollars!" gasped Steve, quickly. "All in real money?"

"Yes, in real money," said Gleason, "and buy you a ticket to New York besides."

"I'll take the job, sir," said Steve, with a readiness that was very natural. "I couldn't save a hundred dollars if I worked for the mistress a year. But you're not to give me the shake, if I do the work."

"I'll be more than glad to pay you, if it's a success."

"What is the work, sir?"

"I want you to watch the man you saw me talking with."

"The valet?"

"Yes."

"I can do that easy, sir," cried Steve. "I'm in the house with him all the time."

"That's what I thought," nodded Gleason. "But I want you to watch him if he goes out, or if he meets anybody on the sly in this locality. If he should, I want you to follow the party and learn where he lives."

"Oh, I'm on to the game now, sir!" exclaimed Steve. "You want me to find out who's got the trunk you two were talking about."

"That's it, precisely," nodded Gleason. "You seem to be rather clever."

"I'd oughter be!" grinned Steve. "I growed up on the Bowery, and lived there till I went into service. I don't mind saying I'd like to get the hundred, sir, and I'll do the square with you if I get it."

The artfulness with which Steve was playing his part completely deceived Gleason.

He took a roll of bills from his pocket and gave Steve a five, saying, quickly:

"Take that for a starter, my girl. And if you locate the trunk for me, I'll give you the balance at once, and send you to New York."

Steve thrust the bill into the bosom of his dress, and went a step further in his clever little design.

"I can tell you how the trunk could be found, sir," he said, with a shrewd display of interest in Gleason's behalf.

"How is that?" the latter eagerly demanded.

"It's like this," rejoined Steve. "The valet is kind of stuck on me, d'ye see? He begun giving me the warm hand as soon as he saw me. So I let him think I was gone on him, too, thinking I might work him for some of his dust. So I've got him on the string, d'ye see?"

"Well, what of that?" demanded Gleason, rather inclined to laugh at the way Steve was putting it.

At the same time, he decided that the girl was very shrewd and unprincipled, which just then suited his purpose to the letter.

"This of it," Steve went on to explain. "Could you get your two pals, the ones that didn't nail the trunk, to slug the valet outside somewheres, and then run him under cover where he can't get away?"

Gleason pricked up his ears.

"Yes, I could do that," he said, quickly. "But what then?"

"Then everybody'd say the valet had done the sneak act, and he was the one guilty of stealing the trunk."

"That's true enough," admitted Gleason. "But how can I locate the trunk any better after having done that?"

"I can tell you how."

"You can?"

"Dead easy, sir!"

"Explain."

"I'll give it to the valet that I'm in love with him, sir. Then I'll show up in the place where you and the gang have him under cover, and tell him I follered you there, and am trying to help him escape."

"Well?"

"But he don't get away right off, d'ye see?" continued Steve. "Then I tell him I'm

still here at the Gleason house, and that a duffer has been round here to see about getting the reward offered for the trunk. Then the valet will think his pals have begun to fear he has flew the coop, and he'll want to get word to 'em, d'ye see?"

"By Heaven! that's the very scheme!" cried Gleason.

"Sure 'tis!" said Steve, with much earnestness.

"Casson will want you to take word to them, if he thinks you are his friend."

"That's just what he'll want, sir."

"And in that way we can locate them and the trunk, and easily secure it."

"It oughter be like rolling off a log, sir."

"And it will be," said Gleason, now thoroughly satisfied with the plan. "It will be dead easy, providing we can secure Casson before he sees his confederates."

"You can do that easy enough," said Steve, contemptuously. "That'll be kid's play."

"In what way can it be done?"

"By getting the valet out of the house, and getting the drop on him on the quiet."

"Can you help me out in that?" asked Gleason.

"Sure, I can."

"In what way?"

"You know the little street back of the stable and grounds here?"

"Yes."

"I'll make a date to meet the valet out there by the gate at eight to-morrow night, to go walking with him."

"Will he come, d'ye think?"

"Will he come!" cried Steve, with scornful significance. "Will a duck go into the water? Will a snowball melt in the sun? Sure, he'll come! And once he is out there, you and your pals can give him the sandbag and lug him off in a hack. What's the matter with that?"

"Nothing is the matter with it!" cried Gleason, with much satisfaction. "Will you do your part, and have him out there to-morrow evening at eight?"

"If he ain't out there," said Steve, decisively; "I'll throw up my hands and quit the job."

"Do so, then, and I'll have all the other arrangements made."

"But he mustn't get on to the fact that I am helping you."

"I'll see that he does not. You can leave that part of it to me," replied Gleason. "And I'll see that you have a clear way to work the rest of the job, if you do this much."

"And the clear way is all I want!" said Steve to himself, now satisfied that he alone could run down the whole gang.

CHAPTER VI.

A DOUBLE GAME.

Steve remained in the stable with Jack Gleason only long enough to perfect their plan for securing the valet the following night, and then returned to the house.

He found it an easy matter to see Mr. Gleason and his wife in their chamber a little later, and to avert the possible miscarriage of the design he had in mind.

On the following day Casson was kept busy by his employer, and found no opportunity to leave the house.

This was done to prevent his making any visit to his confederates.

Jack Gleason left there early that morning, however, and returned to Kennedy's dive in Bluff street to make arrangements for the job against Casson that evening.

During the lunch hour that day, Steve found his first opportunity to speak to the valet, and he at once began to work the other end of his scheme.

"I want to see you alone when you get a chance," he said, significantly, giving Casson

the wink. "Come up to my room, when you can get away from the master."

Casson looked surprised. But the fancy he had taken for the seeming girl led him to think she returned his fondness, and this disarmed him of suspicion.

"What do you want?" he asked, taking Steve's hand for a moment.

"I've something to tell you," whispered Steve, with an air of serious importance.

"About what?"

"I can't tell you here in the hall. Can't you come up to my room a little later?"

"I'll come now. Mr. Gleason is at lunch."

"Come on, then."

In the upper hall Steve made a great display of caution, looking down over the stairs and into the adjoining rooms, before entering his own, much as if he stood in great fear of being discovered in the company of the valet.

Casson appeared more mystified than ever, and finally demanded:

"What's all this for?"

"I don't want to be seen."

"Why not?"

"I'm afraid it might come to the ears of the guy himself, and then 'twould be all up with me, and mebbe with you."

"*Pardieu!*" exclaimed Casson, softly. "What are you driving at? What do you mean?"

"Come in here, now, and I'll tell you," said Steve, drawing the Frenchman into the room.

"Who is it you're afraid of?" demanded Casson, with evident misgivings.

"I'll tell you in a minute, but not till you've made me a promise."

"What promise?"

"That you'll not give me away."

"Betray you?"

"That's what I mean," said Steve, as if in serious apprehension over the future. "The guy would make an end of me, if he knew I was going back on him like this."

Casson began to suspect the truth, and his interest increased.

"Of whom are you talking?" he demanded.

"You'll promise to stand by me?"

"On my word as a Frenchman!"

"I'm speaking of the man who was with you last night in the stable."

"Jack Gleason?"

"The master's brother; yes."

"Good Heavens! How did you know that we were in the stable?"

"I saw you there, and then he made me wise to the whole business."

"You don't mean——"

"About the trunk and the will," interposed Steve, with convincing earnestness. "But he knew I had heard part of what you were saying, and then he offered me money to help him out in the game he is playing."

"Help him in what way?" demanded Casson, with cheeks grown quite pale, and his frowning eyes glowing brightly.

"By watching you," explained Steve.

"For what purpose?"

"He wants to know when you meet the party who has the trunk and the will, and I was to follow the man after you left him and find out where he lives."

"*Sacré!* That was the fool's design, was it?"

"And I was to get a hundred dollars for doing the job for him," added Steve. "See here's the five he gave me for a starter."

The ugly look which settled on Casson's white face while hearing this disclosure gradually gave place to an expression of genuine appreciation.

He looked at Steve for several moments in silence, then impulsively took both of his hands.

He never for a moment doubted that this was a girl who was befriending him, and Steve played with consummate skill and modesty the delicate part he was enacting.

Casson evidently was somewhat affected by this loyalty to his interests, and he presently asked, gravely:

"Why didn't you take up with the offer Gleason made?"

"And watch you?"

"Yes, of course."

"And give you dead away to him?"

"Certainly. You might have got the hundred by doing it."

"What do I care for the hundred, if I've got to get it in that way?" demanded Steve, with scornful vehemence. "D'ye think I'd go back on a friend for the like of that? Besides, I don't like the big duffer—and I do like you!"

Casson laughed softly, and appeared much pleased.

"Do you really like me?" he asked, pressing Steve's hands.

"Sure I do. Couldn't you see that when I first came into the house? You were the first to say a good word to me."

"And would you always stick to me like this?"

"I would if I had the chance," said Steve, blushing like a girl.

"You shall have the chance," said Casson, impulsively.

"D'ye mean it, honest?"

"You shall find I do, Rosy."

"And you'll not give me away to Gleason?"

"I'd sooner cut my tongue out!" exclaimed Casson, and he meant it.

"I like you all the better now," whispered Steve, with a great display of fondness.

"And I'll tell you what we'll do," continued Casson. "If I can do no better, I can at least get the reward that is offered for the return of the trunk, and then——"

"Hark!" interposed Steve, drawing suddenly away and hurriedly opening the door leading into the entry.

"What did you hear?" cried Casson, apprehensively.

"That's the mistress' bell, I must go downstairs."

"Can't I see you a little later?" anxiously asked the Frenchman, now eager to continue the interview.

"Do you really want to?" asked Steve, with an artful display of coquetry.

"Indeed, I do! I want to tell you a plan I have for both of us."

"I'll tell you what I'll do, then."

"What?"

"I'll slip out of the house after dark, and meet you down at the gate back of the stable."

"*Pardieu!* That's good!" cried Casson, plunging into the net without suspicion. "At what time will you be there?"

"How'll eight do?"

"Capital!"

"I'll be there, then."

"And we'll take a walk by ourselves," said Casson, softly; "and I then will tell you the plan I have for——"

"Wait! There goes the bell again. I'll have to leave you."

And Steve slipped out of the arm with which the crafty Frenchman would have clasped him, and hurried from the room and down the stairs, while the bell from Mrs. Gleason's chamber still was sounding through the hall.

But this, too, was a part of Steve's designing, and she had rung it under his instructions.

The more Casson thought of the circumstances during the rest of that day, the more certain he became that Steve was all that he pretended, and was doing him this service because of a genuine infatuation.

If this was the case, assuming Steve really to have been a girl, the wily Frenchman was willing enough to make her his dupe, and the

plan he had in mind most likely would have proved as treacherous as that by which he had victimized Jack Gleason.

But in Steve he had quite a different character to deal with.

For Steve was more clever than the two combined.

Just before eight that evening, the young detective slipped out of the house, and hurried through the grounds adjoining the stable. Fifty feet beyond was the gate of a back fence closing in the estate.

Casson had not yet arrived.

The night was dark, with only a few stars discernible in the clouded sky.

The back street was a narrow one only, with but few houses, and those some distance away.

It was just the locality for such an assault as that which was contemplated.

Steve had waited but a moment, when a heavy, black-bearded man walked along the narrow sidewalk, and paused for barely an instant as he passed along.

"I'm Gleason," he said, in a low, quick whisper. "Will Casson come?"

"Sure thing," answered Steve, quickly.

"Walk him down that way, then, till you pass the end of the fence."

"Leave it to me."

Then the man was gone as he had come, disappearing like a shadow into the darkness, and Steve was again alone at the gate. He had waited but a few minutes when Casson joined him.

The Frenchman vented a low laugh, and slipped his hand through Steve's arm.

"You're here first," he said, quite fondly.

"I've just got here," returned Steve.

"Where shall we go?"

"Any old place suits me. Let's go this way; it's darker."

"All the better," laughed Casson. "Now, as to the plan I was telling you about."

"Am I in it?" giggled Steve, with girlish eagerness.

"Indeed, you are!" said Casson, as they proceeded slowly along the otherwise deserted street.

"What's the plan?"

"First of all, to get as much as we can for the return of the trunk."

"You can get the reward, anyway," suggested Steve.

"Yes; but I want more, if possible."

"And when you've got it?"

"Well, I'll make you my wife, if you'll have me," whispered Casson, slipping his arm around Steve's waist; "and we'll leave this country and go to France."

"Say!" exclaimed Steve, stopping abruptly as they passed the end of the fence, "wouldn't that be just the caper?"

"Would you go?"

"Sure thing, I would!" cried Steve, with a deal of emphasis. "If you'll only do the right thing by me I'll stick to you through thick and thin, I will."

"Well, that's what I mean to do," said Casson. As soon as we get the stuff we'll——"

"You'll never get it!" sounded a voice almost at the Frenchman's elbow.

Then the dark figures of several men sprang out from the gloom, and Casson felt a hand close with a grip of steel around his throat and silence the cry that had risen almost to his lips.

For effect, and to avert the Frenchman's possible suspicion, Steve gave vent to a little scream, and then fell flat upon the sidewalk, as if he had fainted from fright.

With one violent effort, Casson freed his arm and reached for his revolver.

"Drop him! drop him at once!" hissed Gleason, with frightful intensity.

The command was followed by a blow with a sandbag.

A single groan broke from Casson's lips. Then his knees gave way under him, and he fell like a dead man on the gravel walk.

"That'll settle him for a time," growled Fenton, who was the ruffian who had struck him.

"You've not killed him, have you?" cried Steve, now starting up from the walk.

"No, no! D'ye think we're courting a dance on air?" cried Gleason, quickly approaching. "He'll come round by and by. Bring up the hack, Jim."

"And lively!" growled Fenton, bending over the Frenchman's prostrate body and feeling the beat of his heart. "We must get a move on at once. I'll not chance hitting him again."

"Tie up his trap, if he comes to," retorted Kennedy, bluntly. "I'll have the carriage here in a moment."

Jack Gleason took Steve by the shoulder and drew him aside.

"You're earning your money, girl" he said, hurriedly. "If you do the rest of the work as well as you've done this, the money is yours."

"I can do it," rejoined Steve.

"When will you be ready?"

"To-morrow night," said Steve, promptly.

"But you must keep away from the man part of to-morrow, so I can give him the bluff."

"I'll not forget that."

"And where's the place I'm to find him?"

"No. — Bluff street," replied Gleason. "It's a saloon, and the name is Kennedy."

"Any back doors?"

"Yes. Come in through the side alley."

"I'll show up just after dark."

"All right!" exclaimed Gleason. "You'll find me waiting for you."

At that moment Kennedy drove rapidly up with the hack.

The Frenchman still lay unconscious upon the ground.

"Lend a hand," growled Fenton, sharply.

Gleason sprang to aid him, while Kennedy hurried to open the carriage door.

In a moment the Frenchman's limp body was bestowed on the rear seat, and Gleason, with a vicious exultation lighting his eyes, sprang into the carriage.

"To-morrow night, girl!" he turned to whisper, sharply.

"I'll be there!" cried Steve.

Then Fenton also sprang into the vehicle. The door closed with a bang, and Kennedy drove furiously away.

Five minutes later Steve stole back into the house from which he had issued less than a quarter of an hour before.

He had not been missed even.

CHAPTER VII.

STEVE MAKES ANOTHER MOVE.

"The girl's right!" growled Gleason, decisively. "You can lead a horse to water, but you can't force him to drink. Neither can we force this infernal frog-eating Frenchman to tell us where he has hidden the trunk. I've tried it, and I believe the treacherous dog would die first. We can gain our object by strategy only, and the girl's right."

The scene was the back room adjoining Jim Kennedy's dive in Bluff street.

Steve had no difficulty in finding the place. It was well known to the police.

The hour was eight in the evening, just twenty-four hours after the assault upon Casson, who then was lying, secured hand and foot, with a gag in his mouth, in the cellar under Kennedy's saloon.

Steve was seated on the edge of the table in the dismal back room, and in company with Gleason and the two ruffians who had served him as confederates.

Yet neither looked with much favor on the project Steve had suggested.

"Well, you're the boss of the job, and the

one to suffer most if the girl queers it," Kennedy grimly rejoined, in response to Gleason's remarks. "She can see the man, if you say so."

"It's the surest way," said Gleason, decidedly; "and the quickest."

"Where is the man?" demanded Steve.

"In the cellar."

"Isn't there a back window I can force?"

"There's only one, and a pane broken in that," growled Kennedy. "You can get it open easy enough."

"Then let me get at the man, and I'll soon see how the game looks," said Steve. "I'm dead sure I can work it."

"Go make the attempt," commanded Gleason. "Then come back here and tell us."

Steve needed no second bidding.

The plan he had advocated had been thoroughly discussed, and they all knew of what it consisted.

Leaving the place by a rear door, Steve soon located in the gloomy back yard, which was half filled with empty beer kegs, the cellar window to which Kennedy had referred. It was faintly illumined by a smoky lantern burning in one corner of the damp basement, and Steve knelt on the ground outside and found the broken pane.

Bending down to the aperture, he called, softly:

"Hist! hist!"

Instantly a low groan answered the sound.

"Is that you, Mr. Casson?" Steve whispered, sharply. "If it is you, make a noise again."

Again a groan answered his words.

"Keep still, now!" cried Steve. "I heard you, and I'll try to get in. But Gleason is in the saloon, and I'm taking long chances."

All this was horse play on Steve's part, done to blind the Frenchman.

After a few minutes' work Steve succeeded in swinging open the hinged window,

and in reaching the cellar floor three feet below.

He found Casson secured in one corner, with irons both upon his wrists and ankles.

The Frenchman was exceedingly pale, but the spirit of his grim determination showed even through the satisfaction that lighted his eyes when he beheld Steve Manley.

He could not but wonder at the courage of a girl who thus could venture there, yet he did not for a moment suspect the truth.

"I told you I'd stick to you," whispered Steve, while he removed with some difficulty the gag from Casson's mouth. "Speak low, mind you, for Gleason is up in the room overhead, and if looks count for anything, the gang here are bad people."

"How did you find me?" gasped Casson, as soon as he could speak.

"Gleason was at the house again to-day, and I followed him when he left," explained Steve. "I was sure he was the one who nailed you last night."

"One!" hissed Casson, bitterly. "There were three."

"I didn't see but one."

"You fainted."

"And when I came to, you were gone."

"They took me away in a carriage. They have nearly killed me."

"We'll fool 'em yet. I was afraid I couldn't find you."

"Thank God, you did! You are a brave girl, and I'll not forget it."

"D'ye want me to call the police?"

"No, no, that won't do!"

"Why not?" asked Steve, innocently.

"It would expose the whole game."

"I didn't think of that."

"You must help me escape. Once free again, I'll be ready for them next time. Can't you get me a file?"

"Sure I can! And I'll bring it here the first chance I get. I'll get in with it to-night, if I can."

"The sooner the better," said Casson, eagerly; "but don't let them catch you at it. That would ruin all."

"I'll look out they don't catch me," whispered Steve, confidently. "If I can't get in again to-night, I'll come to-morrow."

"I'll try to be patient."

"Mr. Gleason, the master, thinks you've run away."

"For what?"

"Cause you stole the trunk," said Steve, now laying his plan for the morrow. "It's in all the newspapers, how you were afraid of being arrested, and ran off to give the cops the slip. I knew better, but I didn't dare say so for fear I'd spoil your game."

"*Sacré!* I'm glad you didn't," muttered Casson, with a look of serious misgivings. "If it is reported that I have fled, I must get out of this place as quickly as possible."

Steve knew what this meant.

It was the very thing he had anticipated.

Casson evidently feared that his confederates, if they thought that he had fled, would be after the reward offered by William Gleason.

This was the very apprehension Steve was trying to create in the mind of the Frenchman.

"I'll go out again now, if you say so," he replied; "and see if I can buy a file for you. If I can, I'll bring it here to-night."

"*Pardieu!* make the attempt at once!" exclaimed Casson. "Delay may cost me dearly."

Yet despite his faith in Steve, he could not bring himself to disclose the location of the trunk, or to send Steve with a message to his confederates. It was that instinctive caution which one sometimes cannot resist, even when felt to be unreasonable.

"Is there anything I can do before I go?" whispered Steve, preparing to depart in search of the desired tool.

"Only fix the gag again, so they'll not suspect any one has been here," said Casson. "You needn't tie it in so tight, however, and that'll make it easier for me. And come back with the file to-night, if you can."

"I'll do my best, on the level."

"I know you will."

"And if I can't get in to-night, I'll make sure of it some time to-morrow."

"I don't fear that you'll fail me," nodded Casson, with a grateful glance. "Now, then!"

This meant for Steve to replace the gag at once, that he might aid the Frenchman to escape that very night, if possible.

It was very evident to Steve that Casson had been made exceedingly anxious by the disclosure that a report of his flight was in print, and this was precisely what Steve wanted.

It was a safe conjecture in that case, that the first move Casson would make on regaining his liberty, would be to seek his confederates, either to secure or to prevent their returning the stolen property.

It took Steve but a few minutes to replace the gag, and make ready to go.

"I'll come back as soon as I get the files," he again said, softly. "And if the coast is clear, I'll free you before morning."

The Frenchman gave him another grateful look, and Steve then clambered out through the window, which he secured as he had found it. Then he returned to join the knaves in the back room.

He now found Gleason alone, however.

"Well, what do you make of it?" the latter at once demanded.

"It'll be dead easy," Steve answered, confidently. "The whole plan can be worked before this time to-morrow."

"Don't he suspect anything?"

"Not the first thing. I gave him the jolly just as I told you, and now he thinks I'm going to help him escape to-night. To stave off doing that, one of the gang must go in the cellar as if to watch him, and then he'll see I couldn't do the job."

"I'll have Fenton look after that."

"And to-morrow morning I'll come here again and finish the scheme."

"You still think you can blind him?"

"Haven't I done it, so far?" demanded Steve. "I know I can do it."

"What time will you come?"

"I'll be here at nine o'clock. It'll cost me the place I've got, but I don't mind that, for I'm feeling dead sure of the hundred."

Gleason laughed deeply, and nodded his approval.

"You shall have it the moment we have landed the trunk," he quickly answered.

"And the fare to New York!" cried Steve, for effect.

"Yes, and the fare to New York."

"That's all to-night, then, isn't it?"

"Yes," growled Gleason, moodily; "that's all to-night."

"Neither Kennedy nor Fenton were quite satisfied that the girl whom this man had rung into the affair was to be trusted, and when Steve left the dive a few moments later, Kennedy followed and shadowed the young detective all the way to the Gleason house in Allegheny.

But Steve was not to be caught napping in this way.

He suspected that these two ruffians might be up to this very dodge, and he went direct to Gleason's house, quite as if his conduct was all above board.

It was after ten o'clock before Kennedy returned to his dive in Bluff street, but he entered the place in a much more satisfied frame of mind.

Yet Steve Manley was at that very moment at the telephone in Gleason's house, and in communication with Chief O'Mara, the results of which will presently appear.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE ESCAPE.

At nine o'clock the following morning a half-dozen officers in civilian dress left the police headquarters and took various stations in Bluff street, all within view of Jim Kennedy's saloon, and there awaited the movements of the young detective who so cleverly was working out the design he had invented, and who now had imparted his entire plan to Chief O'Mara.

At about the same time, Steve Manley, still in girl's attire, again forced the window at the rear of Kennedy's place, and joined Paul Casson in the gloomy cellar.

Though Steve knew he would suffer no interruption, he first of all made a bluff at fearing it.

"Don't make a noise, or speak above a whisper!" he cried, softly, as he bent above the Frenchman and hastened to remove the gag from his mouth. Gleason and his two pals are now up in the saloon, and I'm taking the chance of a lifetime."

"Were you here again last night?" asked Casson, the moment he could speak.

"Of course I was! But one of the gang

was here watching you, and what could I do? I was at the window till near midnight, and I've lost my place at the Gleason's for staying out late."

"Never mind your place!" cried Casson, under his breath. "I'll make that right with you, if you can get me out of here."

"I'll do that for you," whispered Steve. "And we'll have to work sharp, or your whole game will be queer."

"What do you mean?"

"One of your pals who has the trunk is trying to get the reward."

A muttered oath broke from Casson's lips, and his pallid face grew whiter than ever.

"How do you know that?" he demanded, frowning.

"I heard Mr. Gleason telling the mistress about it this morning."

"Do you know what has been done?"

"I know the master had a letter, for I saw him with it in his hands."

"Do you know what it said?"

"Only what I heard him tell the mistress," Steve hurriedly explained. "He said he'd got word from some party who knew where the trunk was, and who'd agreed to do the square thing if the money was paid and no questions asked."

"My God! is that so?" groaned Casson, writhing in bitter resentment. "I must escape! You must set me free! I must see Deverge before he ruins the whole business!"

"I've got the files!" cried Steve, quickly. "It wouldn't take long."

"But the noise!"

"I've brought a cake of soap, too! That'll deaden the sound."

"You're a wonder for a girl!" cried Casson. "How did you know that?"

"I read about it in a story," Steve promptly exclaimed. "What'll you do, if I get you out of the place?"

"I'll nail that will the first thing of all," said Casson, who now was trembling with excitement. "I must check this move my friends are making. They'd ought to know I have not run away."

"It's all in the papers this morning."

"Do you know when Gleason expects to hear again?"

"Some time to-day."

"Then I must reach the house of Deverge before he leaves it!" cried Casson, excitedly. "Get to work on these irons at once. There's not a moment to be lost."

"Is the place far from here?" demanded Steve, producing two files from the pocket of his dress.

"No, not far. It's over near the Ninth street bridge," Casson hurriedly rejoined. "Get my hands free first, and then I can help you."

"Wait a bit!" cried Steve, starting up and listening. "Before we go at it, I'd better see if the gang upstairs is still in the saloon. If they should hear us, 'twould be all up for sure."

"Can you see them without being observed?"

"Yes; there's a side window in the alley. I saw 'em when I stole in that way, so I took the chance to come down here. I'll not be gone long."

Casson was now so anxious and excited that he scarce thought of making an objection, and Steve quickly left the place by the window, and disappeared from the Frenchman's view.

The move he now was about to attempt was the most hazardous of all. The very nature of it might awaken Gleason's suspicion, yet Steve felt equal to the situation.

Entering the back room, he soon caught Gleason's attention, and beckoned him there from the saloon.

"Well, what does he say?" demanded the gambler. "Will he send you to his confederates?"

"Steve shook his head with evident disgust.

"I reckon the jig's up, as far as that goes," he replied, quickly.

"What does he say?" growled Gleason, with an immediate frown.

"He's stiff as a ram's horn," said Steve. "He wants me to set him free, so he can see his pal and stop him from meeting Gleason."

"But why don't he send you?"

"He says he'll take no chances. He says he knows you'll have to let him go sooner

or later, and that his pal will use him on the square, even if he gets the money. What he wants, is to get out and see him himself."

"But I'll not stand for that!" cried Gleason, with an angry growl.

"It's the only chance left!" said Steve, significantly.

"What do you mean by that?"

"Oh, I'm no fool, if I have kinder failed in the job!" cried Steve, with a quick shake of his head. "I've had a talk with him, and I know the first move he'll make if he gets out of here."

"What will it be?"

"I told him his pal was coming to meet Gleason to-day, to try to get the reward, and the Frenchman's first move will be to go to the house where the trunk is and stop him."

"Are you sure of that?"

"It's what he said himself."

"In that case Fenton and I might follow him and yet get the will," grimly muttered Gleason, running squarely into the very net Steve was spreading for him.

"That was just the caper I had in mind," said Steve, quickly.

"Are you sure he will go there?"

"There ain't any doubt of it."

"Do you know where the house is?"

"He says it's over near the Ninth street bridge, and that only one of his pals is there."

"We can do up one man, right enough," growled Gleason. "If I was certain he would go——"

"Ain't it the only chance?" interrupted Steve, apparently interested only for Gleason's success. "He'll take me along with him, he says, and if you'll give me a gun I'll call him down the moment he finds the trunk. Then if you and Fenton are in the house, the trick will be turned dead easy."

"The chance is worth taking," Gleason now said, bluntly, more than ever struck by the feasibility of the scheme. "But how in thunder are you going to set him free? He's in irons."

Steve was ready for him at every point.

"You'll have to give me time to do that part of the job," he promptly rejoined. "I'll have to get some files and go down there and help him cut the irons. I can give him a

bluff I've bought the tools, and that'll make the game all the stronger with him."

"That's true enough," nodded Gleason.

"I can get him free in an hour, and when we leave the cellar you and Fenton could be laying for us and track us to the house."

"We'll try it," said Gleason, after some little hesitation. "The scheme is at a pass requiring some such desperate move. You get the files and do your part of the job. When you leave here with him, you will know that Fenton and I are following you."

"And when we get to the house?"

"Go in with him, and be ready to let us know in what room to find you."

"Will you enter the house?"

"Yes, if we have to batter down the door," cried Gleason, vehemently. "Did you say you wanted a gun?"

"I wouldn't do any harm to have one," said Steve, innocently. "I wouldn't shoot it for the whole reward, but mebbe I could make a bluff with it, and keep the Frenchman quiet till you came."

"The very thing!" cried Gleason, approvingly.

And he gave Steve the revolver which Casson had carried two nights before.

CHAPTER IX.

ROUNDED UP.

While Gleason rejoined Fenton in the saloon, Steve slipped out by the rear door and watched them through the side window. He waited only to make sure his own movements were not being noticed, and then hastened to rejoin Casson in the cellar.

"Where have you been?" the latter demanded, for the first time feeling a vague suspicion.

It was speedily dispelled, however, by Steve's explanation.

"I've been watching Gleason and one of his pals," he quickly rejoined.

"What are they doing?"

"I thought they were going out, and I waited to see. They've both left the saloon and gone up the street."

"And Kennedy?"

"He's alone, and waiting on the rounders," replied Steve, with evident satisfaction.

"The coast is clear for a time, and if we move sharp we can get the best of 'em."

This information was quite enough to rouse Casson to a high pitch of nervous eagerness, and they both set vigorously to work with the files. In less than an hour the labor of removing the irons was completed, and the Frenchman, with his pale cheeks grown flushed with exultation, stood free on the floor.

"Now, then," cried Steve, "we must make the sneak out of here at once."

"You go ahead," nodded Casson; "for you know the way."

"Follow me close! When you come to the side window in the alley, stoop down below it, so's not to be seen from the saloon."

"I'll watch your own movements."

"That'll be all, and then we'll be in the street and safe to get away."

"And I'll soon have the ribbons in hand again, if that fool Deverge has not ruined all," muttered Casson, while Steve clambered out through the window.

The Frenchman quickly followed him, and in a moment both had safely reached the street.

As they moved hurriedly away, two men from an opposite doorway took up the trail and cautiously followed them.

These men were Jack Gleason and Fenton.

Before these several parties had covered a hundred yards, one by one the half dozen officers who had been patiently watching and waiting also took up the pursuit.

Yet, as far as appearances went, there was nothing of this sort in the wind.

At the end of fifteen minutes Casson and Steve approached an ordinary wooden house near the river, and the former said, softly:

"Here is the place."

They had been walking rapidly, and the Frenchman was nearly out of breath.

"Is this where the trunk is?" Steve asked, with a remarkable display of innocence.

"Yes," answered Casson, glancing sharply about. "A French family lives here, friends of mine, and the woman's husband is the man I mentioned."

"Deverge?"

"Yes, that's the name."

Having satisfied himself that he was not

pursued, Casson had mounted the steps and rung the bell.

It was answered by a slender little woman in a wrapper, who started quickly on seeing Casson, and cried, with a smile:

"Oh, it's you, Paul!"

"Yes, Mrs. Deverge," bowed the valet, politely lifting his hat. "Is Jaques in the house?"

"No; he went out an hour ago."

"Do you know where?"

"He did not say."

"I suppose he still has my trunk here?"

"Oh, yes; it's up in his room."

Casson's face took on an expression of relief.

If the trunk still was there, he believed he yet was in time to avert the calamity he had feared.

"There are one or two things in it, Mrs. Deverge, which I would like to remove," he now said, politely. "I suppose I may go up and get them."

"Why, of course!" exclaimed the woman, laughing. "You may go right up to the room, if you wish. You know the way."

"Certainly! thanks!" cried Casson, bowing and smiling. "Come, Rosy, you may go also. This is the lady's maid in the same family with me, Madame Deverge."

"And a pretty girl she is!" exclaimed the woman, bowing in response to the introduction.

"Yes," laughed Casson, as they entered; "and I'm not sure but I shall marry her, sooner or later."

"It'll be sooner, when the guy begins to sing his other tune," thought Steve, as the woman closed the door by which they had entered.

They scarce had disappeared into the house when Gleason and Fenton came hurrying up from a near corner, intending to effect an entrance without ringing, if possible.

At the same time two men approached from the opposite direction, and met them at the foot of the wooden steps.

"Hello, Fenton!" exclaimed one of them.

Fenton turned about as if struck.

"Good God!" he cried, turning suddenly pale. "Chief O'Mara!"

"Yes!" exclaimed the chief, sharply regarding him. "What little game are you and Jack Gleason now engaged in?"

"No game at all!"

"Well, well, we shall see," laughed Chief O'Mara, quickly making a sign for two other men to then join the group.

"Garrity," he added, "you and the sergeant hold these men in custody, while the rest of us see what's going on in this house."

"You don't mean that I am under arrest!" cried Gleason, upon whose mind there now was dawning a bitter appreciation of the scheme by which he had been duped.

"I don't mean anything else," said Chief O'Mara, curtly.

"And that girl?"

"That girl, Mr. Jack Gleason, was one of my clever young officers. How about that door, Morrissey?"

"It is locked, sir."

"We'll try the back way, then."

Leaving Jack Gleason overcome with dismay that could find no expression in words, the chief quickly led two of the officers into the narrow yard adjoining the dwelling.

While this episode occurred on the street Paul Casson had hastened to one of the attic chambers, closely followed by Steve.

The moment the Frenchman entered the room a cry of satisfaction broke from his lips.

His eyes had fallen upon William Gleason's trunk, still locked and strapped as when delivered to Foley, the expressman.

"*Pardieu!* it is here!" he exclaimed, joyously. "And I don't think it has been opened."

"Have you got a key?" demanded Steve.

"Here in my pocket. It's the one belonging to Mr. Gleason."

"Open her up!" cried Steve, "and we'll see if the will is here."

Casson hurriedly unstrapped the trunk and dropped to his knees before it.

His every movement was imbued with intense eagerness and excitement, and Steve stood by and watched him with interesting interest.

In a moment Casson threw up the cover, and his gaze fell on the neatly-folded garments within.

"It has not been touched!" he cried, excitedly. "The will must be where I left it."

"Look and see," said Steve, feeling for the revolver Gleason had given him.

With haste and eagerness he did not attempt to suppress, the Frenchman began unpacking the trunk. Before the work was finished his impatience got the best of him, and he tossed the lower garments out haphazard over the floor.

The moment the trunk was empty he touched a spring which threw open a panel in the bottom, disclosing a small secret compartment.

And the first thing to meet his excited gaze was the will of Peter Gleason, found precisely where his own hand had placed it.

"*Pardieu*, it is here!" he cried, joyously, reaching to get it. "Our fear has been groundless."

"The will?"

"Yes, the will!"

"Give it to me, Mr. Casson!"

The startling change in Steve's voice caused the Frenchman to look up suddenly, with the coveted document still clasped in his hand.

Steve was standing back of the trunk, and Paul Casson's lifted eyes met the threatening gleam of his own revolver, pointed straight at his head.

"Don't move!" cried Steve, sternly. "Give me the will, and stay where you are! If you don't, I'll have to put you in shape for a ride in the front carriage."

The last vestige of color had gone from Casson's cheeks, and his thin, gray lips began twitching violently.

"What do you mean?" he gasped, faintly.

"Gimme the will!"

"Yes, yes; but——"

"There ain't any buts about it!" cried Steve, as he seized the document from the Frenchman's hand, still covering him with his own weapon. "You've played your game, Mr. Casson, and lost!"

"My God! you've deceived me!" shrieked Casson, with a sudden realization of the truth. "You're not a girl!"

"Well, hardly!" cried Steve. "I only made a mistake this morning and got on me sister's

clothes. D'ye think, if I was a girl, I'd have taken chances with such a crook as you?

"Hark! D'ye hear the steps on the stairs? That's Chief O'Mara and the detectives, coming to give us a call. I thought the party wouldn't be complete without 'em. Don't move! If you do, I'll—ah, Chief O'Mara! Here is the man, and here is the will!"

And, on seeing the chief stride into the room, Steve quickly lowered his weapon and placed the document in Chief O'Mara's extended hand.

The rest may be briefly told.

Before noon that day every person who had had a hand in the robbery was lodged in jail, and the stolen property returned to its owner.

The satisfaction of William Gleason may easily be imagined, and his gratitude found better expression than in words alone.

In addition to the mantle of fame that had fallen on young Steve Manley came also the joy of a far greater wealth than he had ever known.

For before the sun had set on that day of his youthful triumph Steve received from the grateful broker the recompense he so well had earned—the ten thousand dollars reward!

With this princely sum in his possession—for to Steve it was indeed princely—the

clever young detective started in to prepare himself more thoroughly for his chosen profession. He wanted to learn perfectly telegraphy and shorthand, and to get at least a smattering of some of the different languages, so that he could understand conversations and remarks he might hear in a foreign tongue.

Here, then, we will take leave, for the present, of this daring young inspector, who had already won the respect and admiration of Chief O'Mara, and who was heartily liked by every inspector in the famous chief's office.

He did not entirely give up his detective work, but continued to put his newly-acquired knowledge to the test at every opportunity.

Chief O'Mara confidently predicts that young Steve Manley will be one of the greatest, if not the greatest, detectives this country has ever known.

THE END.

Next week's SHIELD WEEKLY (No. 22) will contain "Kit Keen, the Crook Catcher; or, The King of the Kidnappers." This story will introduce the celebrated chief of police of Chicago, and one of his assistants, Kit Keen. Kit's adventures in the metropolis of the West are among the most exciting ever written. Read them. They're great.

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